

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MANAGU 01248 170422Z

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FOR SECRETARY ROGERS FROM AMBASSADOR THEBERGE

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SUBJECT: OVERVIEW OF SECRETARY'S TRIP AND FOLLOWUP TO IT

REF: STATE 061171

1. REACTION TO TRIP: SECRETARY'S TRIP GENERATED FAVORABLE IMPACT ON GON AND PUBLIC OPINION GENERALLY. SUCH TRIPS, AND PERSONAL CONTACTS, SHOW US CONCERN AND INTEREST IN WELFARE AND SECURITY OF OUR FRIENDS AS WORDS CAN NEVER DO. REMARKS OF SECRETARY REAFFIRMING OUR COMMITMENT TO HEMISPHERIC COLLECTIVE SECURITY WERE PARTICULARLY WELL-RECEIVED. AT LEAST ONE MAJOR ISSUE RAISED ON TRIP--THE SPECIAL US-LATIN ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIP--WAS TAKEN SERIOUSLY IN GON CIRCLES AND RAISED IN MONTIEL-KISSINGER BILATERAL. AS REPORTED EARLIER, SECRETARY'S VISIT IMPROVED CLIMATE OF US-LATIN RELATIONS EXCEPT IN USUAL CARPING CIRCLES, AND GAVE NEW IMPETUS TO OUR REGIONAL AND BILATERAL RELATIONS. STRESS GIVEN TO RECOGNITION OF SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH LATIN AMERICA BY SECRETARY WAS PARTICULARLY GRATIFYING TO OUR FRIENDS.

2. US-BRAZIL AXIS: NEITHER GRAVE NOR EVEN MILD CONCERN DISCERNABLE HERE. IN FACT, US-BRAZIL ACCORD WAS GENERALLY VIEWED, AS FAR AS CAN BE DETERMINED, AS A REALISTIC GESTURE TO
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PAGE 02 MANAGU 01248 170422Z

SOLIDIFY OUR RELATIONS WITH BRAZIL, WIDELY RECOGNIZED AS

EMERGING MIDDLE WORLD POWER. THOSE OPPOSING THE AGREEMENT HERE AND ELSEWHERE DO SO BECAUSE OF IDEOLOGY (STRENGTHENS ANTI-LEFT FORCES), LATIN LEADERSHIP COMPETITION (BOLSTERS BRAZIL'S CLAIM), FEAR OF BRAZIL'S ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC EXPANSION (CONCERN OF BORDER COUNTRIES), AND PLAIN ENVY.

3. CUBAN ADVENTURISM: WEAK, VULNERABLE COUNTRIES LIKE NICARAGUA ARE DISQUIETED OVER THE IMPLICATIONS OF CUBA'S ANGOLA ADVENTURE. BUT NICARAGUAN GOVERNMENT, AND NO DOUBT OTHERS IN THE AREA, HAVE A REALISTIC GRASP OF THE POTENTIAL THREAT POSED BY CUBA. CUBA'S DIRECT, ARMED INTERVENTION IN THE REGION IS NOT CONSIDERED A VERY LIKELY CONTINGENCY. WHAT IS FEARED IS STEPPED UP CUBAN INDIRECT AGGRESSION TAKING THE FORM OF MORE TRAINING AND ARMING OF GUERRILLAS AND TERRORISTS. ALSO CAUSE FOR CONCERN IS THE POSSIBLE USE BY HAVANA OF COUNTRIES IDEOLOGICALLY SYMPATHETIC TO CUBA'S TROPICAL COMMUNISM AS A BASE OF SUBVERSIVE OPERATIONS DIRECTED AGAINST NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES. CUBA IS WIDELY PERCEIVED AS DANGEROUS BECAUSE OF SOVIET BACKING WITH ARMS, LOGISTIC SUPPORT AND TRAINING. GON SENSES AN INCIPIENT CUBAN ANTI-NICARAGUAN SOLIDARITY AND PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN THAT IS COORDINATED WITH MOSCOW.

4. THE US AND COLLECTIVE SECURITY: MOST DISTURBING ASPECT OF CUBA'S SOVIET-BACKED ANGOLA ADVENTURE TO NICARAGUA IS THE INABILITY OF THE US TO REACT AND THE OMINOUS PRECEDENT IT MAY HAVE CREATED. CONFIDENCE IN US COMMITMENT TO HEMISPHERIC COLLECTIVE SECURITY WAS SOMEWHAT WEAKENED. STRONG ANXIETY IS FELT IN CERTAIN OFFICIAL AND NONOFFICIAL CIRCLES THAT THE SOVIET AND THIRD WORLD TIDE IS ON THE RISE WHILE THE WEST IS IN DISARRAY. THIS PERCEPTION WAS MODIFIED BY THE SECRETARY'S TRIP AND REAFFIRMATION OF US SUPPORT FOR HEMISPHERIC SECURITY. STRONG RECENT STATEMENTS BY PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY WARNING CUBA AND RUSSIA NOT TO EMBARK ON NEW ADVENTURES ALSO WERE REASSURING.

5. GLOBAL AND REGIONAL POLICIES: US GLOBAL AND REGIONAL POLICIES HAVE A POWERFUL IMPACT ON THE TONE AND SUBSTANCE OF OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH NICARAGUA AND OTHER COUNTRIES. THEY LOOK TO THE US FOR LEADERSHIP, AND ARE DISTURBED WHEN THEY PERCEIVE VACILLATION AND WEAKNESS. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 MANAGU 01248 170422Z

THE SINCERITY OF OUR INTEREST IN THEIR WELFARE AND SECURITY IS MEASURED TO A CONSIDERABLE EXTENT BY OUR WILL AND ABILITY TO STRENGTHEN THE WORLD ECONOMY, ASSIST AND COOPERATE WITH THE LDCS, MAINTAIN A STRONG ECONOMY AND DEFENSE POSTURE, AND RESIST SOVIET AND CUBAN EXPANSION. IT IS, THEREFORE, OF GREAT IMPORTANCE THAT WE MAINTAIN MOMENTUM AT THE GLOBAL AND REGIONAL LEVELS, AS WELL AS ON BILATERAL ISSUES, DURING THE REST OF THIS YEAR.

6. HOW MUCH IS EXPECTED: THE MODERATE, PRACTICAL
CONTENT OF SECRETARY'S STATEMENTS ON TRIP MEANT THAT NO GREAT
EXPECTATIONS WERE RAISED. CREDIBILITY CAN BE MAINTAINED IF
MOMENTUM CREATED BY SECRETARY'S TRIP IS KEPT UP. THIS CAN BE
DONE BY MAKING PROGRESS, AND MAKING PROGRESS KNOWN, ON
BILATERAL ISSUES. WE SHOULD TAKE CREDIT FOR EVEN SMALL, DISCRETE
STEPS FORWARD, AND KEEP FOREIGN MINISTRIES AND MEDIA WELL
APPRISED. WE SHOULD NOT BE SHY ABOUT ADVERTISING CONSTRUCTIVE
MEASURES WE HAVE PROPOSED AND IMPLEMENTED NOR ABOUT INSISTING
ON BUSINESSLIKE RECIPROCITY, ESPECIALLY FROM THOSE SPECIALIZING
IN CONFRONTATION TACTICS AND RHETORIC. THEBERGE SENDS.

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